## Theme One: The Settlement of Fairfield

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The Fairfield Town Seal

The seal for the town of Fairfield is round, consisting of a circle within a circle. In the space between the two circles are the words "Town of Fairfield" and "Connecticut." Three leaves appear before and after the word Connecticut in this ring. Inside the inner circle is a scene with a hill and trees in the background; in the middle ground are two individuals shaking hands (a Native American on the left and Roger Ludlow on the right). The word "SEAL" appears just above the heads of the two individuals and the year "1639" appears at their feet. Three small grapevines appear in the foreground just above a banner which says "qui transtulit sustinet" (he who transplanted sustains).

Grapevines
The people who first landed in New England were amazed at the quantity of wild grapevines they found in the woods. In the old world, vineyards were fenced in and vines were private property. In the New World, they were free to all. It is probable that the three vines stood for the three colonies which united and formed the Connecticut Colony; New Haven, Saybrook and Hartford. Another explanation of the grapevines is tied in with our State Motto, "He who transplanted sustains." According to Newton's publication, "where it came from we do not know. Some think from the verse in the 80th Psalm, 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt and planted it.' It certainly expresses the belief of the leaders of the Connecticut Colonies that God had brought them into a new world and would sustain them in it."
Roger Ludlow and the Pequots

We have tried to summarize a lot of information about Fairfield’s history for the students. One aspect that is not covered thoroughly enough has to do with the Pequot Wars. What follows tries to give you a little insight into what seems to have occurred – it’s much more than the students need and perhaps more than you need, but you may find it helpful in answering some astute student’s questions.

Roger Ludlow and other English settlers in Massachusetts Bay Colony were invited to Connecticut by the Native Americans called the Pequots, who lived in eastern Connecticut (their traditions and culture is shown today at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum). Later on, Roger Ludlow arrived in “Uncoway” in 1637 while chasing the Pequots from Mystic to exterminate them. A clever child may think that sounds strange. And he or she is right! (The word exterminate is not used in the students’ handouts, but it is used in a book titled Fairfield, the Biography of a Community by Thomas J. Farnham which was one of our main resources)

Basic outline of Pequot War information:

- **October, 1634**, delegation of Pequots ask Massachusetts Bay leaders for an alliance Narragansetts and Dutch causing trouble for Pequots – the Pequots offer a trade agreement and land in CT.
- **November 1634**, agreement signed that provided for English settlement of CT as well as trade agreement and helping to establish peace with Narragansetts
  - PROBLEM: Massachusetts Bay does NOT want Connecticut to be a separate colony but rather a continuation of Massachusetts Bay Colony (MBC). Ludlow had other ideas!
  - Ludlow goes to CT with a commission from Massachusetts. He agrees to govern the people of Connecticut for a year and as a subordinate to MBC. He is also required to restrict any belligerent activity to “defensive war”. Apparently if one conquered any land back then, they could lay claim to it. Mass. Wanted to have its own wars of conquest so they could add to their land.

Here is where it gets nasty! Because Ludlow had a reputation for doing what he wanted regardless of written agreements, the elders of MBC thought he might go ahead and make some conquests and lay claim to CT land, so they needed to beat him to it, so to speak.

In **August of 1636** Boston began “punitive expeditions”. Orders were to attack the Narragansetts on Block Island and the Pequots on Long Island sound. The reason was to avenge the murders some years earlier of a Massachusetts trader and an itinerant West Indian trader. Although the Narragansetts committed one of the murders, the Pequots were never involved in anything of this sort. The Pequots were attacked solely because Massachusetts wanted their land.
If previously existing CT settlements of Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor were to attack the Pequots and win, they would claim the land for CT. Massachusetts did not want this to happen and so struck first.

Naturally, the Pequots were furious not only because they were innocent, but because they had invited the English to come here in the first place. In April, 1637, the Pequots began a series of attacks on Saybrook (not successful) then Wethersfield (more successful) May, 1637, Roger Ludlow – once again ignoring his agreement with Massachusetts – declares an offensive war on the Pequots. To say that these attacks were heartless and cruel would be the understatement of the century. Although Ludlow himself was not a participant in some of the first slaughtering of women, children, and elderly (the Mystic Massacre), he did agree to join in the pursuit of the Pequots as they fled along the coast of Connecticut. Ultimately, the many of the Pequots were killed in the Sasqua Indian’s territory (current Southport) in the Great Swamp Fight and in New York among the Mohawks.

With these victories (as Ludlow would call them perhaps) Connecticut was in a position to claim its own rights to a charter. The rule of Massachusetts Bay would be finished.

Fairfield’s Early History and Population Growth

For the town of Fairfield’s first twenty years, almost the entire population lived roughly within four square miles of each other. The center was the original Four Squares, located today at the corner of Old Post Road and Beach Road. Soon, new residents settled as far away as seven or eight miles.

When settlers arrived in Fairfield, they immediately began to increase the size of the town by purchasing more and more land from the Native Americans. By 1670, Fairfield went as far north as Redding and included Westport and the Black Rock area of Bridgeport. The town’s population continued to grow - driven by its location and the town’s importance as the county seat. As more people begin to spread out from the “four squares,” the distance to the meeting house and school house became an issue. Parishes and then towns were established and broke off.

Fairfield’s Population & Growth:
-1640 Approximately 8-10 households within town borders
(Western border=following Sasco Creek: Eastern border=following Pequonnock River: Northern border= A days walk inland: Southern Border=Long Island Sound)
-By about 1654 there are approximately 94 households within the town borders
-1661 Town buys land extending to Saugatuck River
-1666 Bankside (Green’s Farms) becomes part of Fairfield
-1700 more than 150 households (approximately 1050 people) live within Fairfield's borders
(Western border=following Saugatuck River to Red Coat Road (Wilton) North following modern Weston-Wilton town line: Eastern border=following Park Avenue (Bridgeport) North to South Park Avenue (Easton) continue North Park Avenue (Easton) to modern Redding-Newtown town line: Northern border= modern Redding-Bethel town line: Southern Border=Long Island Sound) approximately 140 sq. miles
-1756 Fairfield includes 4455 people (4195 whites, 260 blacks) It is the fourth largest town (Middletown [1st], Norwich [2nd], New Haven [3rd]) in Connecticut by population and it is the second largest (Norwich [1st]) by taxable property

New Parishes Established:
-1678 Residents of Pequonnock (Stratfield) area of Fairfield petition the Connecticut General Assembly for their own school house --- The Assembly grants permission in 1679
-1690 Residents of Pequonnock (Stratfield) area of Fairfield petition the Connecticut General Assembly for their own minister --- The assembly establishes the Fairfield Village Ecclesiastical Society in 1694. They further change the name to Stratfield Ecclesiastical Society in 1701.
This area commonly referred to as the Stratfield Parish is the first of seven such parishes to be formed in Fairfield. Following a similar pattern to Stratfield’s establishment.
-1711 West Parish (Compo, Greens Farms, the area west of Sasco Creek) established
-1725 Northwest Parish (renamed Greenfield Parish in 1727) established
-1729 Redding Parish established
-1757 Norfield Parish (Northern Westport, Weston) established
-1762 North Fairfield Parish (Easton) established

**Parts of the “Old Fairfield” Break Off:**
The following shows which towns were once a part of Fairfield and when they “broke off:”
1) Redding, 1676
2) Weston (including present-day Easton), 1787
3) Westport, 1835
4) Greens Farms becomes a part of Westport, 1842
5) Easton breaks off from Weston, 1845
6) Black Rock becomes a part of Bridgeport, 1870
The Settlement of Fairfield – Answer Key

Abundance – a very large quantity of something.
Affluent - having a great deal of money; wealthy.
Ambitious – having or showing a strong desire and determination to succeed.
Approximately – close to actual number, but not exactly accurate or exact.
Cash Crop - a crop that is not used by the farmer, but is grown only to sell for a profit.
Cellars – early makeshift homes of the settlers.
Foodstuffs – a substance suitable for consumption as food.
Hamlet – a small settlement, usually one smaller than a village.
Livestock – farm animals regarded as an asset or having a value.
Improvised – to create or perform something spontaneously without preparation.
Influential – having great influence over someone or something.
Resistant – offering resistance, or to be against, someone or something.
Navigable – a body of water deep enough to be sailed on by ships or boats.
Uncoway – Fairfield’s original Native American name which means, “place beyond.”
Variation – a different or distinct version or form of something.
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Primary Source Primer
Historians use a wide variety of sources to answer questions about the past. In their research, history scholars use both primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are actual records that have survived from the past, such as letters, photographs, articles of clothing. Secondary sources are accounts of the past created by people writing about events sometime after they happened.

People living in the past left many clues about their lives. These clues include both primary and secondary sources in the form of books, personal papers, government documents, letters, oral accounts, diaries, maps, photographs, reports, novels and short stories, artifacts, coins, stamps, and many other things. Historians call all of these clues together the historical record.

For more information, go to the American Memory from the Library of Congress http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html

The Burning of Fairfield
On the morning of July 7, 1779, some 2,000 British soldiers made landfall on Fairfield Beach. Over the course of the next two days, the town of Fairfield, which had supported independence, was raided and almost completely destroyed.

In depositions given almost three weeks later, several women described the events of those two days following the landing of the British. To go to their testimonies, quoted from Royal R. Hinman’s A Historical Collection (618-623.), select from the following:

The total list of losses includes 97 dwelling houses, (17 barns, 48 stores, 2 school houses, 1 county house, 2 meeting houses, and 1 Episcopal church. Damage was done to other individuals not mentioned aforesaid, to the amount of £1,855:3:2, by the destruction of personal properly, a large share of which was owned by widows and other females.
Reasons for the British Attack

The British had several reasons for attacking the coast of Connecticut and Fairfield. Several prominent Generals disagreed about the common goal, yet several reasons emerge, including:

- British Generals hoped to “draw out” George Washington from his encampment at West Point on the Hudson River in New York.
- The raids would send a message to the rebel privateers who were spying and attacking British supply ships.
- Fairfield and the surrounding area provided provisions and supplies to the militia, such as wheat, beef, pork, and mutton. Horses were indispensable for cavalry soldiers as well as pulling supplies. Governor Trumbull ordered huge quantities of flax. It is believed that flax was traded for war materials.
- General Tryon wanted Black Rock Fort, which defended Fairfield, destroyed.
The Burning of Fairfield Timeline – Answer Key

July 2, 1779 – British General Tryon leaves New York with 2,600 troops.

July 7, 1779
4:00 a.m. – Fairfield Coast Guard spots 4 British ships off the coast
Isaac Jarvis fires a warning shot from Black Rock Fort then a fog sets in over Fairfield
William Wheeler and his father move their cattle to Toilsome Hill
10:00 a.m. – The fog lifts and the British ships are seen off McKenzie’s Point
3:00 p.m. – Tryon and his men come ashore, near South Pine Creek Road and their troops march east
4:00 p.m. – Tryon and his men near the spot called The Pines
British troops march east on Fairfield Beach Road and then march up Beach Road
5:30 p.m. – British reinforcements arrive, led by General Garth and begin to march over Sasco Hill
The Fairfield militia wait at Round Hill
Some of the militia march to the Fairfield Green and fire upon the British
The militia also destroy a bridge at Ash Creek
6:30 p.m. – The first houses are burned near the Fairfield Green. One of them is the home of Isaac Jennings
That night, there was a thunderstorm that cracked and flashed

July 8, 1779
4:00 a.m. – The British start to bombard Black Rock Fort so that they could retreat
7:00 a.m. – The British stop attacking Black Rock Fort
8:00 a.m. – The remaining Crown Soldiers began marching back to their ships
Throughout the day, German mercenaries destroy the buildings around the Fairfield Green by setting them on fire.
2:00 p.m. – The British troops depart in their ships
Later that day, Greens Farms is attacked

July 11, 1779 – The British attack Norwalk

The total number of buildings destroyed included:
97 Dwelling Houses
17 Barns
48 Stores
2 Schoolhouses
1 County House
2 Meeting Houses
1 Episcopal Church
Primary Accounts from the Burning of Fairfield:

Eunice Dennie Burr

The text below is quoted from the book by Royal R. Hinman entitled *A Historical Collection* (618-623.), located in the library at the Fairfield Museum and History Center.

“The testimony of Eunice Burr, wife of Thaddeus Burr, Esq., respecting the proceedings of the enemy at Fairfield, on the 7th and 8th days of July, 1779, is as follows:—

On Wednesday morning, 7th of July, 1779, between 9 and 10 o'clock, some friends came in and told me that they believed that the enemy's shipping were standing in, and that it was their opinion that the enemy would land.

Being formerly well acquainted with a number of the British officers, and ever finding them of a polite, humane disposition, and observing the good order they kept up among their soldiers, I was induced [forced], once to act against all the entreaties [pleading] of my friends, and risk my life, and all that was dear to me, in hopes to save an ancient, pleasant mansion house, with its valuable furniture and stores.

Did Eunice Burr leave Fairfield or stay in her house? Why?

By the time the . . . enemy had got up to the court house; instead of the once humane and polite Britons [British], a pack of the most barbarous ruffians came rushing into the house, and repeatedly accosted [attacked] me with, “You rebel, where is your husband, he is a selectman [town official]!” . . . at the same time stripping me of my buckles, tearing down the curtains of my bed, breaking the frame of my dressing glass [mirror], pulling out the drawers of my table and desk; and after taking what they could find, they then went up stairs, and proceeded much in the same manner.

. . . there came in an officer . . . upon my representation of the conduct of the ruffians towards me, he ordered them out of the house. No sooner were one set out, but another
came in, calling for cider, breaking down the china, stone, and glass ware in the closets, and wherever they found it.

In the midst of this confusion, General Tryon came into the house; he behaved with politeness; he demanded the papers. I told him there were none but of very old dates, which related to the old estates. The general said, those are what we want, for we intend to have the estates.

Gen. Tryon, upon hearing a captain relate the situation he found me in, was kind enough to order two sentries at the house, which caused me a more quiet night than I feared; though horror and distress were my constant companions, a great part of the town being then in flames. Just before the sun rose, Capt. Chapman came to me very politely, and told me that Gen. Tryon wanted to speak to me. I immediately waited on him; he told me that . . . he should spare my buildings, Mr. Elliot's, the church, and meeting house; that he did not like destroying those buildings.

He asked for pen, ink, and paper. I very readily procured them; he then, unasked, and unsolicited by me, gave me a protection for my house and property, and the Rev. Mr. Elliot's, written with his own hand, and signed with his own name. Thus deluded with a false hope, after the fatigue of the day, night, and more dreadful morning, when every building around me, was on fire; and some of my poor neighbors, whose habitations were in flames, had run into my house for shelter, instead of attempting to carry out and secure what was in the house; our whole attention was taken up in supplying the house with water, and although they were almost buried in flames, neither the barn or house took fire.

Who else was in the house with Mrs. Burr? Why?

The pleasure and satisfaction I felt for a few minutes, in thinking that I had a shelter for myself and some of my distressed friends, was great; but alas! how soon was it over. No sooner had the horn blew, I suppose for the whole to retreat, my sentries went off, and a
band of those savage creatures were left as a **rear guard** to complete the destruction; some of whom, unperceived by me, came into the house . . .

Seeing a number more . . . come into the gate, I once more took courage, went out and **entreated [pleaded]** them to **spare** the house; told them that I had Gen. Tryon's protection in writing; upon which they [said bad things about] the general . . . and tore it from me, while a number went into the house to set fire to it; two or three others come to search me; they took my pocket book and buttons, which till then, I had preserved . . . I disengaged my pocket and fled into the meadow. The house, with every thing they had left, both furniture and stores, were consumed.

Should this narration fall into the hands of any of those officers, who afforded me assistance, in those hours of horror and distress, they have my sincere thanks for it.

Sworn at Fairfield, August 2, 1779, before Samuel Squire, Justice of Peace.”
Primary Accounts from the Burning of Fairfield:
Mary Fish Silliman

Mrs. Silliman witnessed the night that Fairfield burned. This is her account, quoted from the book by Joy Day Buel and Richard Buel, Jr. entitled The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America located in the library at the Fairfield Museum and History Center

"The firing grew heavier, and as we traveled many ran out of their houses to speak with us, women distressed for their husbands, sons, and brothers, fearing that they would fall in battle...But oh what a dreadful night! We could see at seven miles distant, the light of the devouring flames by which the town was reduced to ashes. The night was spent in dreadful expectation, and sleep departed from my eyes...But how it was with the young man Joseph I could not hear, until the next morning, when I had great reason to bless God for his preservation, for he had been where the bullets flew, and a cannon ball killed a man that was not far from him." -- pg. 156
The Ogden House

During the spring of 1750, newlyweds David and Jane Sturges Ogden moved into their new home on the road to Greenfield. They had reason to look forward to their future. Both came from established families who could afford to start them out well in life. Jane brought a reasonable dowry and David’s family provided the house and land. For the next 125 years it was home for the Ogden family in the farming and coastal shipping town of Fairfield. Today, the Ogden House is an exceptional survivor of a typical mid-18th century farmhouse.

David and Jane Ogden descended from 17th century Puritan settlers of Fairfield. Both of their families lived not more than 2 miles apart; it was a typical 18th century Fairfield marriage between neighbors. Jane’s parents lived in Mill Plain and David’s brother in the next lot (this house is now 1334 Bronson Road). They kept the faith of their ancestors; David, Jane and their children were baptized in the Congregational Church. Jane had her first child within a year, which was the norm. Colonial women had an average of 8 children. Jane had 10; two died immediately and one “died young.” She bore children until she was 41.

David Ogden was a dying man when he made out his will on August 21, 1775. Fifteen days later the 48 year old farmer was dead. No letters, diaries, or paintings exist today from the family. Yet David’s will, estate inventory and other family documents have been carefully examined to furnish the house appropriately with objects including textiles and fine pieces of furniture with Fairfield provenance. Although no longer surrounded by its original farmland or outbuildings, the Ogden House retains its beautiful situation overlooking Brown's Brook in the fertile Mill River Valley.

An eighteenth-century style herb garden behind the house is laid out symmetrically with raised beds. The garden features herbs typical of those used at the time, and is generously maintained by the Fairfield Garden Club. A bridge across the brook leads to a trail planted with native Connecticut wild flowers and shrubs. Ogden House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Above: A photograph of the Ogden House in the 1930s, from the collections of the Fairfield Museum and History Center.
Bibliography

Most of the sources cited below were accessed in the library at the Fairfield Museum and History Center and used for the “Famous Fairfield Folks” biographies. Additional information was found in the exhibit script for “Landscape of Change.” The Fairfield Museum would also like to acknowledge the many volunteers, interns and museum staff who worked on this project.

- The map “Unquowa 1639-1652. A true Map of the Compact Part of the Town of Fairfield” was used by permission from the Fairfield Public Library.
- The maps of New England and Connecticut were traced from existing maps.
- The map, “Map of Colonial Fairfield, CT” was created by William D. Lee and used with his permission. A copy is in the collections of the Fairfield Museum and History Center.

Fairfield – Buildings - 449 Mill Plain Road. Fairfield Museum and History Center Vertical File.

Fairfield – Buildings - 739 Old Post Road (Burr Mansion). Fairfield Museum and History Center Vertical File.


Gold’s Dragoons. Fairfield Museum and History Center Vertical File.


Perry, John H. “Andrew Ward – An Historical Sketch. For the occasion of the dedication of the Andrew Ward Monument” Fairfield: Published by the Author, 13 June, 1907.

Sturges. Fairfield Museum and History Center Vertical File.

Sturges Family Papers, 1707 - 1954. MS#32. Finding Aid. Fairfield Museum and History Center Special Collections.
Internet Resources

Fairfield Museum and History Center
www.fairfieldhs.org

Colonial History from ConneCTKids

The Culper Spy Ring
For more information on George Washington’s spy ring (and fun activities!) go to:
- Spy Letters of the American Revolution – includes images of primary sources and examples of how secret messages were hidden in quill pens, codes and more!
  http://www.si.umich.edu/spies/methods-quill.html
- The Setauket Spy Ring – includes an excellent map of the Culper Spy Ring
  http://homework.northport.k12.ny.us/ocean/mdavidson/est572/spy.htm
- Three Village Historical Society, Setauket, NY
  This is where Fairfield resident and privateer Caleb Brewster was from.
  http://www.threevillagehistoricalsociety.org/local_history.htm

Burr Family History
www.burrcook.com/history/burrhisa.htm

Colonial Williamsburg
www.history.org

Connecticut History Online
www.cthistoryonline.org

Connecticut Historical Society
www.chs.org

Fairfield, CT Public Library
www.fairfieldpubliclibrary.org

Fairfield Chamber of Commerce
www.fairfieldctchamber.com
Information on business, demographics, transportation and visitor information.

History Channel Classroom
www.history.com/classroom/
Library of Congress
www.loc.gov/index.html
Library of Congress – American Memory
memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html

National Geographic Xpeditions
www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions

PBS
www.pbs.org/history
PBS – Colonial House
www.pbs.org/wnet/colonialhouse/history/index.html
PBS - Lewis and Clark Expedition
www.pbs.org/lewisandclark

Smithsonian Institution
www.smithsonianeducation.org/students

Town of Fairfield and the Town of Fairfield Map used in Theme II / Lesson 2
www.fairfieldct.org/history.htm
http://www.fairfieldct.org/zonemap.pdf

Within These Walls: Travel back in time to colonial Ipswich, MA
http://americanhistory.si.edu/house/default.asp

You Be the Historian: the Springer Family of New Castle, DE
http://americanhistory.si.edu/kids/springer/

US State Department: Digital Diplomacy for Students: www.state.gov/kids